



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Wolf Administration Outlines Winter Preparations, Guidance for Public Readiness**

*Winter Maintenance Positions Available Statewide*

**Harrisburg, PA** – Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) Acting Executive Deputy Secretary Melissa Batula, Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) Director Randy Padfield, and Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (PTC) COO Craig Shuey today held a media briefing to outline the commonwealth's plans for services in the coming winter season and discuss how the public can successfully prepare.

"Our number-one priority is safety, and that guides our winter preparations and operations," Batula said. "We are ready for the season ahead and motorists are our partners in making this season a safe one."

The public can access travel information on nearly 40,000 state-maintained roadway miles year-round at [www.511PA.com](http://www.511PA.com), and during the winter they can find plow-truck locations and details of when state-maintained roadways were last plowed. The information is made possible by PennDOT's Automated Vehicle Location (AVL) technology, which uses units in each of the over 2,500 department-owned and rented plow trucks to send a cellular signal showing where a truck is located.

To help the public prepare for the season and share information about winter services, PennDOT offers operational information and traveler resources at [www.penndot.gov/winter](http://www.penndot.gov/winter). The site also has a complete winter guide with detailed information about winter services in each of [PennDOT's 11 engineering districts](#).

Each year, the PTC readies itself to confront the winter elements by properly preparing its entire fleet of trucks, plows and salt spreaders and training more than 400 licensed equipment operators so they are ready to activate 24/7 staffing this fall. Turnpike traffic and weather operations are also at the ready. The team's focus is to fully understand the conditions on the roadway and to keep the Turnpike system as free of snow and ice as possible. Motorists should take the time now to assure their vehicles are ready for winter and to know their own winter driving skills.

"Our professional crews have worked hard to prepare for the upcoming winter season, and they are ready," Shuey said. "Winter storms are a fact of life in our region, so drivers should take the time now to inspect the condition of their own vehicles and be sure that wipers and tires will perform well. Also, now is the time to download the 511PA app to access traffic delay warnings, weather forecasts, traffic speed information for all of Pennsylvania's major roadways. You can be ready for what's up ahead with the swipe of a screen."

With \$197.7 million budgeted for this winter's statewide operations, PennDOT deploys about 4,700 on-the-road workers, has more than 560,000 tons of salt on hand across the state and will take salt deliveries throughout the winter.

[PennDOT is actively seeking](#) more than 600 temporary equipment operators statewide for the winter season to supplement the department's full-time staff. Details on minimum requirements, such as possession of a CDL, as well as application information, are available at [www.employment.pa.gov](http://www.employment.pa.gov). Through the same website, job seekers can apply for over 100 other non-operator winter positions such as diesel and construction equipment mechanics, welders, clerks and more.

If motorists encounter snow or ice-covered roads, they should slow down, increase their following distance and avoid distractions. Last winter in Pennsylvania, preliminary data shows that there were 301 crashes resulting in four fatalities and 143 injuries on snowy, slushy or ice-covered roadways where aggressive-driving behaviors such as speeding or making careless lane changes were factors.

Motorists should prepare for potential bad weather by ensuring they have supplies in their cars before heading out: food, water, blankets, extra gloves and hats, cell phone charger, hand or foot warmers, windshield brush and scraper, and any specialized items like medications or baby and pet supplies.

"If you must travel during times of inclement winter weather your planning should include knowing how you'll get weather and travel alerts along your entire travel route," Padfield said. "Make sure others know your estimated travel time, and have basic emergency supplies in your car, including any specialized items needed for young children or pets."

Padfield said it's also important to know the difference between a weather watch and warning:

- A watch means there is increased risk of a hazardous weather event, but its occurrence, location, or timing is still uncertain. Pay attention to forecasts and plan out what you will do if/when it occurs.
- A warning means the weather event is imminent or is happening. Take immediate action to protect lives and property.

In addition, snow squalls can often produce dangerous and deadly travel hazards on otherwise clear winter days. The National Weather Service now issues "Snow Squall Warnings" which alert drivers of whiteout conditions and slippery roadways, so motorists can avoid traveling directly into these dangerous squalls.

For more information on PennDOT's winter preparations and additional winter-driving resources for motorists, visit [the department's winter website](#).

Motorists can check conditions on more than 40,000 roadway miles, including color-coded winter conditions on 2,900 miles, by visiting [www.511PA.com](http://www.511PA.com). 511PA, which is free and available 24 hours a day, provides traffic delay warnings, weather forecasts, traffic speed information, and access to more than 1,000 traffic cameras. 511PA is also available through a free smartphone application for iPhone and Android devices, by calling 5-1-1, or by following regional twitter alerts accessible on the 511PA website.

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